

**Noted Web Designer, Author, and  
Neurophysiologist to Present Keynote Address**

TCCTA members are urged to make a special effort to attend the general session and banquet at the 61st Annual State Convention at The Fairmont Dallas Hotel.

Speaking on the convention theme will be James Bower.

The age-old complaint of college professors is that primary and secondary education is not preparing students for college. The age-old complaint of primary and secondary teachers is that colleges and universities don't understand the constraints of the real world. Community colleges are caught somewhere in the middle.

Eight years ago, Dr. Bower and several colleagues at the California Institute of Technology decided to stop playing the blame game and use the World Wide Web to reach directly to kids. To do so, they launched one of the first 3-D virtual worlds, *Whyville.net*, which is still the only virtual world primarily focused on education. Now *Whyville* has more than 3 million registered users. *Whyville* has also been the recipient of several grants by the Texas Workforce Commission to specifically introduce middle school aged children to careers deemed to be important for Texas, including biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, aeronautics and robotics. These grants require the involvement of at least 20,000 Texas middle school students within the next year.

Dr. Bower will first describe the origins, motivations, and pedagogical structure of *Whyville*. He will then dig deeper into the Texas-based workforce activities, and describe how they are engaging middle school aged children in college level learning. He will close by discussing the implications of virtual worlds-based learning for post-secondary education. These kids are coming, time to prepare!

The speaker is a professor of computational neuroscience at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and at the University of Texas, San Antonio. He was a professor at the California Institute of Technology for 17 years. His scientific research focuses on the cerebellum and the mammalian olfactory system and employs a variety of experimental and computational techniques. He has published more than 100 scientific articles and authored several books and received a Ph.D. in neurophysiology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Tickets for the Thursday banquet may be ordered using the form on this page. Only current TCCTA members may order tickets. Tickets will be held at the convention desk, attached to the member's registration card. Other important information is included on the form below.

Seating will be available for those who are unable to attend the banquet but wish to attend the general session, which will begin at 7:15 p.m.



**James Bower**

**REQUEST FOR BANQUET TICKETS**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) at \$35 each for the TCCTA banquet scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 21, 2008, at The Fairmont Dallas.

- My check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, payable to TCCTA, is enclosed.
- Please charge my credit card in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
- MasterCard     Visa    Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I understand that full refunds will be made if reservations are cancelled before **12:00 Noon, Friday, February 15**, and that no refund will be made for reservations cancelled after that time. (Banquet tickets are transferrable.)

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ticket(s) will be held at the convention registration desk under your name.**

*NOTE: TICKET ORDER SHOULD BE RECEIVED IN STATE OFFICE BY FEB. 15 TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROCESSING. MAIL TO: TCCTA, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. (If paying by credit card, you may fax the form to Area Code 512, 328-1086.)*